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Release No.: 02282004-1

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RIBBON CUTTING ON NEW CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER Mansura is home to new state-of-the-art facility

MANSURA, February 28, 2004 – A crowd of community leaders and early childhood educators gathered today to celebrate the grand opening and dedication of the new 7,300 square-foot, eight-classroom Early Childhood Development and Family Center of Avoyelles.

The new center will provide early childhood development programs for children six weeks to five years old—in addition to an after-school program available for children up to 12 years old.

“Our center will provide children knowledge and skills to prepare them for success in school,” said Tonya M. Plauche, Executive Director for the center. “We also offer parents education programs and a resource library filled with children’s books, videos, and audio tapes.” A health clinic with a full-time nurse is located at the center for enrolled children. Immunization tracking and dental screening field trips will be offered as well as screenings for hearing and vision.

This project was funded by a \$725,000 USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan. “The Rural Development Community Facilities Program helps rural communities develop essential community facilities for public use—facilities such as schools, libraries, hospitals, medical clinics, and childcare facilities,” said Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana. “Our goal is to help rural residents enjoy the same quality of life as their city neighbors.”

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. Further information on USDA Rural Development’s loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development’s web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/la/>.

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